

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OSLO 01183 111349Z POSS DUPE
ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00 SP-02
SS-15 PM-04 /088 W
-----111547Z 124952 /42

R 111250Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3360
INFO ERDA WASHINGTON
ERDA GERMANTOWN
USEC BRUSSELS 1512

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, NO
SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN PLUTONIUM AT EUROCHEMIC FACILITY IN BELGIUM

REF: (A) STATE 44711, (B) EC BRUSSELS 2123

1. EMBASSY OSLO WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON NORWEGIAN ATTEMPTS TO DISPOSE OF ITS PLUTONIUM CURRENTLY AT EUROCHEMIC FACILITY IN BELGIUM. IN ADDITION, FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS HAVE OCCURRED BEYOND THOSE REPORTED IN REFTELS. WE HAVE DELAYED OUR COMMENTS IN HOPE THAT NORWEGIANS WOULD BE ABLE TO RESOLVE PROBLEM WITHOUT ERDA INVOLVEMENT. THIS DID NOT WORK OUT, HOWEVER, AND THE NORWEGIANS ARE BACK TO PINNING THEIR HOPES ON ERDA.

2. OFFICIALS AT THE INSTITUTE FOR ATOMIC ENERGY HAVE DISCUSSED PLUTONIUM DISPOSAL PROBLEM WITH EMBOFFS AND VISITING ERDA OFFICIALS IN THE PAST, AND WE HAVE RECENTLY ENCOURAGED THEM TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH ERDA IN WASHINGTON. NORWEGIANS FRANKLY ADMIT THEY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO USE FOR THE EUROCHEMIC PLUTONIUM, DO NOT WANT TO STORE IT IN NORWAY, AND ARE INTERESTED MERELY IN GETTING RID OF IT.
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PRICE IS NOT AN ISSUE--IN FACT THE NORWEGIANS PROBABLY WOULD PAY TO HAVE IT TAKEN OFF THEIR HANDS. WHEN EMBOFFS INQUIRED WHY NORWEGIANS HAD NOT ACCEPTED STEAG OFFER (REF B, PARA 2B), INSTITUTE OFFICIALS CLAIMED THIS WAS THE FIRST THEY HAD HEARD OF IT. AS A RESULT OF OUR CONVERSATIONS, INSTITUTE OFFICIALS INITIATED DIRECT CONTACT WITH STEAG IN HOPES OF SOLVING PROBLEM WITH NO

FURTHER US INVOLVEMENT. AN INSTITUTE OFFICIAL REPORTED TO EMBASSY ON MARCH 9 THAT STEAG HAS NOW DECIDED IT WILL NOT TAKE THE MATERIAL--EVEN FREE OF CHARGE. APPARENTLY, THE BUILDUP OF AMERICIUM HAS RENDERED THE MATERIAL SO IMPURE THAT NO ECONOMIC USE CAN BE FOUND FOR IT. THE NORWEGIANS ARE NOW BACK TO SQUARE ONE AND ARE MORE THAN EVER INTERESTED IN A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FACILITATED BY ERDA.

3. ABOVE AND BEYOND THE REAL TECHNICAL AND PHYSICAL SECURITY PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN TRANSPORTING AND STORING THE PLUTONIUM, INSTITUTE OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT POLITICAL FACTORS UNDERLIE THEIR RELUCTANCE TO BRING THE PLUTONIUM BACK HERE. THUS THEIR WILLINGNESS TO GET RID OF IT, REGARDLESS OF WHAT PRICE IT MAY FETCH.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: NUCLEAR POWER AND NUCLEAR MATERIALS IN GENERAL ARE SENSITIVE ISSUES IN NORWAY. FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST, THE NORWEGIANS HAVE CATEGORICALLY REJECTED ANY THOUGHTS OF NUCLEAR POWER HERE. THE POLITICAL CONSENSUS ON THIS IS BROAD, AND ANY RENEWED ATTENTION ON NUCLEAR ISSUES--SUCH AS THE POSSIBLE SITUATION IN WHICH A SIZEABLE AMOUNT OF PLUTONIUM WERE BEING BROUGHT INTO NORWAY--WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR THE GOVERNMENT. THE NERVE IS ESPECIALLY CLOSE TO THE SURFACE IN THIS, AN ELECTION YEAR. THE NUCLEAR ISSUE IN SWEDISH POLITICS IMMEDIATELY COMES TO MIND. IF ATTENTION WERE FOCUSED ON NUCLEAR MATTERS, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT EVEN SUCH ACTIVITIES AS NORWEGIAN PARTICIPATION IN OECD NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES COULD BE QUESTIONED. IT IS FOR ALL THESE REASONS THAT THE NORWEGIANS HAVE ASKED ERDA TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF PURCHASING OR STORING THE NORWEGIAN PLUTONIUM CURRENTLY AT EUROCHEMIC. PERHAPS A FURTHER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPTION WOULD BE FOR ERDA TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICES IN SEEKING TO FIND ANOTHER RECIPIENT. WE HAVE PROMISED TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH INSTITUTE OFFICIALS HERE, SO ANY PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ERDA WISHES TO MAKE WOULD BE WELCOME.

4. AMBASSADOR, PAST AEC/NRC COMMISSIONER/CHAIRMAN, SUGGESTS THAT ERDA CONSIDER OFFERING TO ASSUME U.S. OWNERSHIP OF PU AND COVER COST OF TRANSPORT TO U.S. THOUGH PU MAY HAVE AM BUILDUP, ACCEPTANCE OF THIS CRITICAL MATERIAL BY U.S. WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR GENERAL STANCE ON SAFEGUARDS AND NON-PROLIFERATION. ALSO, MATERIAL HAS POSSIBLE FUTURE LARGE ENERGY VALUE. AMBASSADOR BELIEVES THAT ERDA SHOULD BE URGED TO LOOK INTO THIS MATTER AND THAT DEPARTMENT COORDINATE WITH NRC TO INSURE THAT IMPORT LICENSES WOULD BE OBTAINABLE IF REQUIRED.

ANDERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OSLO01183
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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